

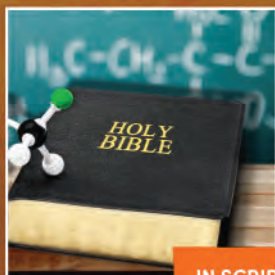
Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR COMPANION ...



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING



FALL 2025 VOL 32 NO 3 US \$4.99





“Drop the dispute



before it escalates.”

– Proverbs 17:14, ISV

Our Why



“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Focusing on such noble principles becomes increasingly challenging especially while gripping powerful hand-held computers that display countless distractions 24/7.

One of *Creation Illustrated* magazine’s goals since its inception in 1993 has been to aid readers with a Philippians 4:8 experience by providing content rich in Creation’s splendor, uplifting character lessons, and useful scripture. Here’s why.

- **Whatever is true:** In today’s world of misinformation, we need to ferret out facts and truth rather than pass along unchecked or unproven information. (See warnings in Proverbs 16:28 and Ephesians 4:29.) The ninth commandment prohibits bearing false witness, and *Creation Illustrated* seeks to research the details in each story and uphold the truth of God’s Word throughout every issue.

- **Whatever is noble and honorable:** Trust and integrity result from keeping our word and promises. We hope to encourage this in others by producing *Creation Illustrated* with high standards of quality and ethical practices.

- **Whatever is just:** *Creation Illustrated* seeks to be fair by avoiding favoritism, pride, power, or greed. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Philippians 2:3, KJV). In short, we try to treat others (authors, photographers, subscribers, advertisers, printers, mailers, digital experts, and donors) as we would like to be treated.

- **Whatever is pure:** By providing uplifting material, we hope to help everyone, young and old, guard their minds and hearts from harmful content. A publication like *Creation Illustrated* can be displayed in homes and businesses without concerns of immoral material, confrontational opinions, or misleading ads.

- **Whatever is lovely:** By beholding we become changed. So, *Creation Illustrated* provides the most stunning and captivating splendor found in God’s handiwork to transform the mind and elevate the heart toward a worshipful countenance among our readers.

- **Whatever is commendable:** *Creation Illustrated* celebrates the opportunity to help everyone follow Christ’s example. Jesus always showed compassion, meekness, and kindness—traits that appear to be waning in this weary world. Yet, we commend those who surrender to do His will.

- **Whatever is excellent and praiseworthy:** With countless attention-grabbing messages available, *Creation Illustrated* hopes to stand apart from the rest, not because we seek praise but because of Whom we are called to represent—the One who is truly praiseworthy. That’s why.

The Publishers



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Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 32, No. 3

Our Purpose . . .

is to share the wonders of God's creation. By revealing fresh insights of His infinite wisdom, gentle touch, undeniable justice, redeeming love, and flawless design, pure truth shall bring renewed peace. Each part of this publication is offered as a reprieve from the daily rigors of life so that all can look to the future with unbridled gratitude and hope.

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The cover photo of a long-eared owl was taken by Ondrej Prosky of the Czech Republic.

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Connections

In today's all-consuming pocket-computer society, people thrive on connections. The younger crowd can text more than a hundred times per day, and nearly four hundred billion emails get sent worldwide daily, which is roughly six hundred times the amount of snail mail sent per day. Additionally, Facebook messages and posts can exceed a hundred billion per day, and then there's Instagram, TikTok, and many other communications platforms vying for the massive *connections* traffic.

I'm old enough to remember when the mail got checked once a day, the news came once a day in print and via broadcast, and the telephone hung on the wall. Today hardly ten minutes can pass without checking for email, scanning the latest news, or responding to another chime notification. Yet, even with all of these instant electronic connections, loneliness, anxiety, and depression run rampant.

So, why are so many companies scrambling and capitalizing on this insatiable craving for connections? Because the need and desire to interrelate was designed by the Creator from the very beginning. He wanted to draw close to His children and for them to draw close to each other. His majestic Creation still provides the ideal environment in which to bask in such genuine connections.

In this issue's "Re-Creation and Restoration" feature about Maine's Acadia National Park, we learn that city dwellers sought to connect with nature and nature's God back in the 1800s in that region. The author takes us there to experience the wonders and satisfaction of connecting with Creation in the park, which still attracts four million visitors per year.

A formerly homeless man tells of a similar connection with God and His handiwork while sleeping under the stars in both urban and rural settings in the "My Walk With God" story. Not feeling alone in such a trying situation reveals the mutual desire for God and His children to remain connected.

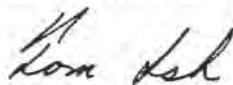
Even wild creatures like the "Eager Beavers" in this edition try to remain connected by staying with one life partner and working together to nurture their offspring that depend on faithful support and interaction to learn how to flourish in the wild.

Family interactions also create meaningful memories like when a mother and daughter planted tulip bulbs together in the fall as told in the children's story. Their cherished connection with each other will blossom even further when the colorful fruits of their labor burst forth in early spring.

Other horticultural connections get inspired in garden plots throughout the world as shown in the story called "Global Garden Designs." Visitors flock to these spaces to connect with the pleasantly presented verdure, as well as with each other in such an inviting environment.

Such carefully designed elements point to the Creator's crowning act when He formed humans at the end of Creation day six. At the core of His astounding work lies 206 intricately connected bones that support our bodies. Learn how two categories of these bones relate to the two categories that form God's decalogue and how they meaningfully connect and illustrate His principles.

Both the natural world and His inspired Word expose the foundational and fundamental truth that connecting with the divine remains essential, and unceasing prayer provides the most reliable connection with God! If the Internet, magazines, telephones, and all other human connections vanished, we must embrace the fact that He will do anything to regain, reassure, and restore our connection with Him. He demonstrated that on the cross and promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Loneliness is not viable among genuine, divine, and eternal connections with our Creator and Redeemer.



Tom Ish, editor/publisher

Sharing Our Mail

Smell the roses . . .

I've been blessed with one of your magazines from a friend in prison. It's nice to see the things God creates for us to enjoy. The world is so crazy and fast. God's Word and the stuff you share in your articles are a blessing. It reminds me of an old phrase I've heard, "stop and smell the roses." It didn't make sense back then, but it does now!

If we would take time and enjoy life, it would be a better place. I hope to share God's Word and His amazing creations with

others while in prison. Thank God for second chances. I would like to know how I could receive your magazine and share it with others. It would be a blessing while on my journey. Thank you from a friend in Christ.

P. Sweany
Branchville, Indiana

In her honor . . .

I receive your Creation publication out of the generosity of my special friend. I am sending a donation in her honor to help in your efforts to transform souls for eternity in schools, hospitals, and prisons. May God's blessings abound in your lives as you continue to publish your beautiful work. Your magazine is truly magnificent and awe-inspiring. God's bountiful blessings.

C. Young
Lady Lake, Florida

Eight years . . .

Hello, my name is Ashley W., and I am currently serving an eight-year sentence. I have received your magazines before, and I really enjoyed them. I would like to see if I can please receive them

again. Thank you for your time. God bless.

Ashely, W.
Wayne Count Jail
Waynesboro, Tennessee



Drew picture . . .

My name is Cody W., and I am locked up at Wabash Correctional Facility in Indiana. I drew this picture of the squirrel (inspired by the back cover of your Fall 2022 issue) because I feel like God created squirrels to be a peaceful animal that builds their homes inside trees.

I don't know how to send money to you at Creation Illustrated. I am incarcerated at this point. I love nature, and I love reading about God and the things He created. I am sending this picture as a donation to your magazine.

God gave us all gifts to do things in His world. Thank you for all the things you all do

for everyone. I would like to receive a letter from you all. God bless.

Cody W.
Wabash Correctional
Facility
Carlisle, Indiana

No advertising . . .

I really love Creation Illustrated! It's a fabulous magazine and a staple in my monthly reading of several creation publications. I have been a subscriber for many years.

However, I want to challenge you in your position of no advertising. Everyone advertises, it's part of doing business!

B. Peck
Abingdon, Maryland

Editors Note: Thank you for your concern. We are happy to know you are a faithful subscriber to Creation Illustrated. We started the publication thirty-two years ago and did not have any advertising in it for the first ten years. Then for about ten years we included advertisements in the print edition. Now the advertisements with hyperlinks to each advertiser's website are found in the digital issues that subscribers can access in their accounts.

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Benevolent

C R E A T I O N U P C L O S E,



Birch wood and bark provide a variety of uses.

Do you know which deciduous tree has inspired paintings, poems, songs, and even dances?—the birch tree, which can easily be recognized by its white, papery bark with black and grayish eye-shaped markings. Hence the nickname—“the watchful tree.”

God created birches in such a way that they would fulfill a variety of needs. Since even the wet wood of birches is flammable, it makes great firewood; the buds and leaves

provide ingredients in nontraditional medicine; and the leaves serve as a dye to make wool a yellow tint.

Indigenous people of North America even built wigwam houses and canoes from birch bark. Slavic people used it for weaving baskets and bags, making footwear and cradles, and even writing ancient manuscripts from the eleventh through fifteenth centuries. Birch wood is used for plywood, household items (clothespins, ice cream sticks, and toothpicks), and for commercial production of

Birch Trees

B Y T A T I A N A C L A U D Y



Jenny Miner



Tatiana Claudy

Birch sap contains several nutrients and is used in a variety of benevolent ways.

semisynthetic fiber (Lyocell) made from cellulose. Birch tar has been utilized to treat skin conditions on both people and animals. Today cosmetics can include birch tar in shampoo, hair conditioners, and soap bars.

In the springtime, birch sap (naturally sweet clear liquid) gets collected for various uses. Studies indicate that ingesting it can improve digestion, help with detoxification, and support urinary-tract health. The liquid contains vitamin C, as well as minerals and nutrients (magnesium,

phosphorus, calcium, and sodium). People ordinarily drink birch sap as birch water or birch juice that is fresh and unpasteurized. If fermented, it turns into vinegar. Birch sap can be also used to produce syrup. Such diverse uses found among the sixty species of birch trees demonstrate their diverse benevolent design at the hands of the Creator.

Paper bark birch, also known as American white birch or canoe birch, is native to North America and grows up to sixty feet tall with a trunk up to thirty inches

in diameter. The dark green triangular leaves turn bright-yellow in fall. Thin horizontal paper-like layers can be peeled off from the tree's bark, which explains this species' name, although young saplings have brownish bark. It takes about five years for a birch to mature and develop its famous bark that is orange on the inside and white on the outside. White bark not only adds beauty, it also protects the trees by lowering the absorption of heat. Truly, "His work is perfect" (Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV).

As I stood in the birch forest in Karelia (a woodsy area in Russia near Finland) amidst gorgeous trees with their magnificent white trunks, I recalled the promise, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). After we repent and accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, our "faithful and just" Creator fulfills His commitment "to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). From this time on each of us becomes "a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Erman's birch, native to Japan, Korea, Russia's Far East, and Northeast China, can reach up to seventy feet in height. The mature trees have creamy-white bark hanging in

shreds from their trunks. Their hearty roots can penetrate into crevices between rocks, which is why this birch species often populates places where other trees cannot survive and therefore gets called the *stone birch*.

While traveling in Russia, I saw many Erman's birches growing on steep rocky slopes, which teaches us how to rejoice in the Lord even in challenging circumstances. "Therefore we do not lose heart . . . For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:16, 17).

North America's water birch (also called red birch or mountain birch) appears more scrubby but can still grow up to fifty feet high. Unlike other birches, this one has nonpeeling, smooth, shiny bark with white horizontal stripes. The bark colors vary from brownish-red to purple to even blackish. Water birches can endure floods and winds so they are abundant on mountain riverbanks often growing in clusters with multiple trunks sharing a mutual root system. I think this feature reminds us about the importance of unity and interdependence within the body of Christ as admonished in 1 Corinthians 1:10. "Now I plead with you,



Birch create stunning fall scenes, and in the spring the drooping catkins provide food for bees and birds.

Tatiana Claudy

brethren . . . that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Dwarf birch, a native Alaska shrub, is prevalent in the arctic and subarctic regions in North America, Iceland, Greenland, Scandinavia, and Russia (especially in Siberia). Growing to only 3.3 feet in height, this species has grayish bark and small shiny, round leaves that turn orange and red in the fall. Dwarf birches tolerate cold weather and limited sunlight. From this tree we can learn how to be humble and content without reproach. The apostle Paul explained the blessing of such an attitude. “I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10, NIV).

Birches not only add beauty to the landscape, they are indispensable for the environment. As one of the pioneer plants that appear in deforested areas, they help restore habitats for animals and birds. Shallow roots prevent soil erosion, and quick decomposition of their leaves and bark improve soil quality. Birch roots form a symbiotic

relationship with certain bacteria that results in converting nitrogen into beneficial matter for the trees—an example of cooperation and interdependence that can be found throughout Creation. Surely, “His understanding no one can fathom” (Isaiah 40:28, NIV)!

Interestingly, edible forest mushrooms only grow under birch trees including: brown cap boletus, *Boletus betulicola*, *Lactarius turpis* (also known as the ugly milk-cap), and *Lactarius torminosus*. Moreover, birch polypore (a smooth hoof-shaped beige bracket fungus that helps recycle organic matter) grows only on dead birch trees.

Benevolent birch trees also serve as a food source for various animals. In spring these trees flower with green or brown drooping *catkins*, and bees consume their pollen. Later the catkins produce tiny winged *nutlets*, and many birds (siskins, juncos, chickadees, and finches) feast on them. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers drill holes in the trunks and feed on the sap. Mammals such as deer, moose, beavers, porcupines, and hares feast on birch bark, leaves, and twigs. In winter, creatures can survive by eating the inner part of the birch bark.

Not surprisingly, many years ago native people in



Erman's birch trees cling to rocky cliffs, and various forms of fungus can grow on the trees.



Birch tree forests can be very bright as they disperse the light that reflects from their bark.

Scandinavia baked bread from the dried and ground inner birch bark. Even today people in Nordic countries use birch bark flour for fiber and additional nutrients, which underscores the promises found in Psalm 36:6, 7. “You, Lord, preserve both people and animals. How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!” (NIV).

The Lord intended these fabulous trees to have the average lifespan of about a hundred years, but the survival of birch can be shortened by pests such as bronze birch borers. The larvae of these beetles make long tunnels under the trees’ bark, thus preventing branches from receiving nutrients and water. Weakened trees are especially prone to such infestation. Fortunately, some species, including paper bark birch, have developed some resistance to these enemies.

I believe these botanical wonders provide God’s children with several spiritual insights. First, we have to grow strong in faith by reading the Bible daily because “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Second, we need to beware of temptations—the “cares, riches, and pleasures of life” (Luke 8:14)—that might lead us astray from the Lord. Third, when facing our spiritual enemy, we must “resist him, steadfast in

the faith” (1 Peter 5:9). In these trials we are not alone; our caring heavenly Father always helps us as revealed in Psalm 34:19. “The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all” (NIV).

As I strolled through the birch forest, I noticed that the whole area appeared exceptionally bright, because birch bark contains *betulin* that disperses light. This reminded me that we are “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8), and we “walk in the light as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7). Moreover, Jesus instructed us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5: 16).

At the end of my forest walk, I prayed and thanked God for this jewel of His creation and for the spiritual wisdom birch trees convey to us. “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord” (Psalms 96:11–13). **C**

Tatiana Claudy writes from Pleasant Lake, Indiana, where she enjoys exploring Creation for insights and lessons that teach us more about His character, which helps draw us closer to God.



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Eager

Beavers

What lowly and obscure creature can engineer and change an entire ecosystem? The industrious, orange-toothed, wood-eating beaver has a legacy of damming streams, creating ponds, and establishing green spaces for other wildlife to flourish along the shores of freshwater habitats in the Northern Hemisphere. Such a significant environmental impact can make landscapes more resilient by reducing droughts, floods, and wildfires.

Hence, this second largest rodent that can weigh up to a hundred pounds was elevated to fame in 1975 as Canada's national animal with its likeness embossed on the Canadian nickel—a dramatic shift from becoming nearly extinct as a result of the rampant fur trade of beaver pelts for a couple hundred years earlier.

**By Samuel Peters
with Tom Ish**

To help fend off such an onslaught and to avoid other predators, these excellent swimmers can remain submerged for six to eight minutes and travel eight hundred meters or more! They tuck their little hands under their chin and let their big webbed hind feet swiftly propel them forward with their paddle tail serving as a rudder.

God created beavers to dwell near water where they could navigate and flourish even in challenging circumstances. Just as the beaver uses its swimming skills to escape danger, we can trust God to provide us a means of escape. Psalms 91:4 assures that "He shall cover you . . . His truth shall be your shield and buckler." We also have an obligation to warn others of danger just as the beaver does with a sharp slap of its flat tail on the surface of the water.

The beaver's clumsiness on land contrasts with its grace in water reminding us that God's strength shines through our weaknesses. "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10).

Not only can beavers maneuver well in water, God designed beavers with built-in goggles to protect their beady eyes. Their eyelids are transparent, which they can close underwater and still see extremely well while also avoiding water-borne irritants. So, the idea of swimming goggles was first crafted by our Creator proving that "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Furthermore, their nostrils close up, and they have extra flesh on the inside of their lips that can close behind their front teeth. This allows these

unique creatures to carry things and even eat without getting a mouthful of water.

Beavers have an appetite for trees—especially the inner bark, leaves, twigs, buds, fruits, as well as aquatic plants. And God gave them the right tools to consume such hard materials—specialized rodent teeth. Their front teeth never stop growing, and their enamel-producing cells don't self-destruct. These strong incisors have two basic layers—dentin in the back and enamel in the front that contains a thin layer with iron incorporated into it. This is what makes the teeth of beavers orange, but it also makes them extra hard. The front of the tooth wears down more slowly than the back that essentially provides a self-sharpening chisel.

The beaver's specialized teeth point toward our reassurance in Christ to equip us for our purposes no matter how difficult the challenges may be. James 1:2, 3 assures us, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance" (NIV).

Beavers only scrape off and eat a thin layer of the wood under the bark of the tree that is the living tissue where the nutrients exist, and they usually target smaller branches and leaves that are closer to the ground as these creatures can't climb like other rodents. To feed on higher branches, beavers devise a more elaborate plan; they cut down the whole tree. Then they stack the remaining wood that can function as a shelter or to eventually be used to build dams and lodges.

These determined creatures can be amazingly persistent and dogged in bringing down trees despite

“You know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

—James 1:3



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Beavers have amazing swimming abilities as they use their hind webbed feet to propel them underwater for great distances (above). The size of a tree (left) does not seem to intimidate determined beavers that also consume the tree's small twigs (below).



Mark Gottlieb

“Those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

—Hebrews 5:14

Bryan Reynolds



The beaver's chisel-sharp teeth can gnaw down sizable trees (above), and they eat the inner bark, twigs, and leaves for nourishment (right). Their eager and industrious skills aid in building massive dams and lodges that can alter entire environments.



© Tom & Pat Leeson



© Tom & Pat Leeson

how small they are compared to the trees. God urges us to persevere in faith because it is only then that we can do great things through Him as promised in Galatians 6:9. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

Other attributes we should learn from beavers include the art of preparation and long-term planning as they cut the branches to size and store them for later. We, too, must always plan and prepare our spirits through fervent prayer and interaction with God, who will provide and guide us in our endeavors. Proverbs 30:25 demonstrates, "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer" (KJV).

As crafty engineers, beavers are able to build well-protected shelters with sticks, mud, and weeds in the middle of the water. Their God-given sense of industry helps them to utilize every aspect of the tree appropriately either for nourishment or shelter. God's message to us through this is to utilize our talents wisely so He can supply even more. "For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away" (Matthew 25:29, NASB).

Dwelling within these shelters in a more relaxed state, these animals regurgitate, so to speak, the wood they had eaten earlier in order to complete the complex digestion process of the heavy cellulose of the wood. While regurgitate is not a very pleasant term, it's important for us to study and then go further to reflect and re-digest the Word of God and the spiritual truths that He has revealed to us. Hebrews

5:14 eludes to the notion that mature Christians can fully process truth. "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Most people are familiar with the beaver's interesting ability to build dams mainly for protecting themselves from predators, as well as to secure their access to food especially during the colder months. Beaver dams are built in shallow streams and rivers that create flooded areas or beaver ponds by placing branches, sticks, and logs across a stream, often anchoring them to rocks or other stable objects. The creatures then weave smaller sticks and aquatic plants between the foundation logs and secure them with mud and vegetation to create a sturdy structure. They continue to add layers of materials, gradually increasing the dam's height and reinforcing it with more mud and plants. Finally, they seal the dam by applying a layer of mud and aquatic plants, making it impermeable to water and able to withstand strong currents.

The world's longest beaver dam is located in a remote part of Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Alberta, Canada. At 2,790 feet long (nearly a half mile), or over twice the length of the Hoover Dam, the structure was first identified in 2007 by a researcher using satellite imagery and is so big that it is visible from space. The dam and several generations of North American beavers that maintain it have dramatically transformed the region by creating a pond containing roughly seventy million liters of water.

In Genesis 2:15 God commissions humanity to care for the earth—to "cultivate and keep it" (AMP).

Beavers, in their remarkable way, demonstrate this stewardship principle although some people see their activity as destructive. Beavers' environmental stewardship mirrors God's care for creation. Psalm 24:1 declares, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (NIV). Furthermore, beaver dams and ponds support biodiversity, filter water, and regulate carbon.

Unlike other rodents that have a lot of offspring that require minimal parental care, beavers adopt a different strategy. They form monogamous pairs often for life, and they care for their babies for a couple of years. This display of long-term commitment when choosing a mate is endorsed by the Word of God. "'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'" (Matthew 19:5). Not only do they fulfill God's command to be fruitful and multiply, beavers also show parental mentorship as taught in Psalm 127:3-5. "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them" (NIV). Proverbs 22:6 echoes a similar message. "Start children off the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it" (NIV). This God-ordained pattern is vitally important because the instincts and skills in young beavers need to be refined by watching and learning from their parents. Attempts at constructing dams and lodges improve over time as the young beavers learn to build incredible structures and life-sustaining ecosystems.

Just as the world's largest beaver dam endures largely because of the legacy of industriousness and stewardship among generations of beavers, Christians

must carry on the legacy of Christendom by never going silent about the love and light of Christ from generation to generation. Psalm 78:4 declares, "We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done."

Studying God's design in nature might just be the beginning of wisdom and innovation in our human endeavors as explained in Romans 1:20. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." 

Samuel Peters writes from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where he studies the details of nature and connects scripture with each lesson gleaned from the hand of the Creator. Tom Ish is the editor and publisher of Creation Illustrated.

*“The earth is the Lord’s, and
everything in it.”*

—Psalm 24:1 (NIV)



© Tom & Pat Leeson

Beaver dams (above) form shelter and impact the environment.
Beaver kits stay close to their parents for about two years.



© Tom & Pat Leeson



Mark Gottlieb

RE-CREATION OUTDOORS

Acadia National Park

BY CHRISTINE GRAEF

Each morning from October to March the sunrise first kisses America at highest point on the Atlantic coast—Cadillac Mountain, the jewel of Acadia National Park. Attracting more than four million visitors a year makes Acadia among the most popular of the country's sixty-three national parks. Prior to this onslaught of humanity, the Wabanaki natives—"the people of the dawnland"—traveled here in birch bark canoes to hunt, fish, gather berries, and glean basket-making materials.

Mount Desert Island, the largest island off the coast of Maine, hosts this natural haven's 49,075 acres laced with more than a hundred fifty miles of trails (from coastal walks to mountain climbs) that accommodate all ability levels. Another 45 miles of crushed stone





The rising sun first kisses America at the top of Cadillac Mountain.

Jeremy Nickoson

Caleb Steuer

SOLACE SEEKING

carriage roads encourage walking, biking, and horseback riding through lush forest and over gurgling brooks. Twenty-four small lakes and ponds also summon kayaking, canoeing, and fishing enthusiasts.

Several trails lead up Cadillac Mountain that can take up to four hours to walk. From the 4.5 mile ascent overlooking the rich water of Frenchman Bay to the moderate seven-mile climb that descends to the Featherbed (a sparkling glacier pond), hikers can find the jaunt that best fits their sense of adventure. A friend and I decided to drive 30 minutes up to a parking lot and walk the Cadillac Summit Loop—a half mile path circling the top of the mountain that is mostly paved and topped with gravel, along with some dirt and stone steps leading to a viewing platform on the west side.

As we walked the trail, waves thunderously boomed against the granite ledges below. Oddly juxtaposed against the tranquil terrain, railroad tracks can be seen in the distance that once transported open-air railway cars up the steep mountain in the late 1800s—evidence that solace-seeking visitors have scouted Acadia for many decades. The railway was eventually replaced by carriage routes, automobile roads, and walkable trails.

But what compels people to climb 1,530 feet up to the summit of Cadillac Mountain? While it may appear diminutive compared to the *fourteeners* in the Rockies or the jagged Alpen peaks that pierce the sky in Europe, there is something that draws souls to nature's highest points. Psalm 90:2 point to the One who created it all. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." Such a preamble to exploring Creation sets our perspective on solid ground.



A steel ladder (left) aids hikers on the Beehive Trail. The Bass Harbor Head Light Station (above) warns seafarers of the jagged coastline.

NPS

“Before the mountains were brought forth . . .”

An easy half-mile walk can take more than an hour with all the pauses along the way to take in the sights. We took two hours as we climbed and left our troubles behind us. The valleys don't look as immense as they did when we were crossing them. Time spent in valleys can seem to be everything there is; yet, the desire to look up inspires a sense of destiny that compels us to reach beyond our comfort zone.

Wrapping around Cadillac's summit I could see the outer islands, pine forests, salt marshes, narrow lakes, and u-shaped valleys. The rockbound tip of Schoodic Peninsula comes into view to the east. Further along the path the Cranberry Isles formed by volcanic flows accumulating in the ocean basin now stand fertile with wild cranberries. To the northeast I see Mount Desert Island's biggest town—Bar Harbor—with the five Porcupine Islands lying just offshore.

The landscape tells the tale of how God used fire and ice to form this coast where a series of volcanoes erupted depositing thick layers of ash and lava. Shifting tectonic plates brought the bedrock with bands of white and gray quartz and feldspar to the surface leaving these granitic mountains ringed by lowlands.

In the frigid depths beneath the surface of the ocean lies a rugged mountainous sea floor stretching 360 miles out to sea. The glaciers cut broad valleys marked with long scratches and crescent-shaped gouges. Eventually, the glaciers melted into rivers and streams, and the ocean swelled to cover the lowlands. The scattered narrow lakes filled with water so clear and clean that rocks can be seen at the bottom. Eagle Lake's crystal-cool waters are so pure no sediment needs to be filtered out before being treated for drinking.



Stormy seas wash away the sand and expose the rocky terrain.

NPS



Loons glide through the many lakes

PURE AND UNDEFILED

Is this why we climb and explore? Do we long for a pure and undefiled world? I look down at the water where water striders, dragonflies, frogs, turtles, landlocked salmon, lake trout, loons, and bald eagles have a home. Birders find themselves overjoyed with some three hundred feathered species to observe. Favorites include the peregrine falcon, double-crested cormorants, common eiders, gulls, and black guillemots that nest on the rocky ledges and raise their young on Egg Rock—a small island with a lighthouse.

We came to Acadia in search of a satisfying connection with nature and to answer the yearnings in the secret chambers of our hearts. Stunning sights renew the notion that we are created for a better world where we feel at home with the Creator. Romans 1:20 reveals the importance of knowing Him through His handiwork. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

Most of the shores gather pebbles and boulders tumbled endlessly by the ocean forces that smooth and create a mosaic of colors. Small creatures hide and cling in the spaces to keep from washing away in the changing tides. The island’s rocky border briefly gives way to Sand Beach, a cove protected from menacing waves. Stairs lead down to the soft stretch of sand that invites bare feet and popular picnics. Every handful of sifting grains tells a remnant story of the tiny sea creatures that populated the area. Mussels, sea urchins, barnacles, and periwinkles left their shells behind so the churning sea could grind them into countless grains of sand.

We climbed around the mountain until we reached the lookout area. The view opens to a sweeping vista in all directions. White puffy clouds on their pilgrimage across the sky seem



and ponds.

NPS

The glassy surface of Eagle Lake attracts water fowl, canoers, and kayakers.

NPS

“My help comes from the Lord . . .”

almost near enough to touch. Nahum 1:3 tells us these clouds are the dust of God’s feet.

Climbing presents plenty of challenges—overcoming obstacles, pushing beyond perceived limits, and realizing weaknesses. Yet, after mustering enough strength to reach the summit, it is not our strength that becomes the focus. It is our smallness that triggers a sense of humility amid Creation’s grandeur. At the summit, we see how the Creator designed the landscape to all fit together into a whole. Even the valleys are in their proper place as a reminder that our personal valleys where we once passed through sorrows and doubts fit into His overall plan for our lives.

Is that why we climb? Do we thirst to see the bigger picture and discover what lies behind the veil? “I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1, 2). God formed mountains on the third day of Creation when He separated the dry land from the waters. (See Genesis 1:9, 10.) He prepared these places for us to find Him and ourselves.

Jesus often sought refuge on a mountain to be by Himself to pray. (See Matthew 14:23, Mark 6:46, and Luke 6:12.) The ark of Noah rested atop the mountains of Ararat when the floodwaters receded. (See Genesis 8:1–5.) Abraham climbed a mountain in Moriah when God tested his faith by asking him to sacrifice Isaac. (See Genesis 22.) The Ten Commandments were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. (See Exodus 19, 20.). James, John, and Peter witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus high on a mountain. (See Matthew 17:1–3.)

Our journeys through the valleys may be longer than we want them to be, but the mountains stand and lure us to keep our eyes on the summit. If we hold to the path, we will



Fog and storms add to Acadia's foreboding coastline.

Jeremy Nickoson

NPS

NATURE - STARVED SOULS

always come to joy. As I stood on rock formed by the power of God using ice and fire, I thought of the many generations of visitors that these eastern mountains have welcomed to bask in their splendor and strength.

The insatiable draw to Acadia led to the Green Mountain Cog Railway that ran from Eagle Lake to Cadillac's summit followed by carriage routes in the early 1900s with granite boulders as guardrails. Then numerous hiking trails got cleared through woodlands to make a way to the refuge of high places for nature-starved souls. With persistent effort by park workers and volunteers, the trails eventually became smoother to accommodate strollers and wheelchairs. Others built steps and secured iron-rung ladders up steep slopes. Such efforts hearken back to when God promised to lead Israel through the wilderness that seemed impassable. "Behold, I will do a new thing; . . . I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19, KJV).

Micah 4:1, 2 tells of yet another mountain. "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.'"

On the mountains we now climb, we glimpse how wide, long, high, and deep remains the power of God. Acadia (the only national park in the northeast) attracts millions of urbanites who are interested in the stunning fall foliage, the solace of winter snowshoeing, the thrill of spring fishing, the reprieve of summer hikes, the rustic life of camping, the heavenly spectacle



Barred owls find refuge in the national park.



Breathtaking panoramas inspire awe toward the Creator.

Jim Still-Pepper

“I will make a way in the wilderness.”

of stargazing, and the creative outlet for artists seeking to capture the changing light on God’s creation. The vast communities of nature seekers are deeply diverse.

I believe the Lord made all this to reveal a foreshadowing of our ascent to His mountain—reminding us who we are meant to be and who we will be. “For behold, He who forms mountains, and creates the wind, who declares to man what his thought is, and makes the morning darkness, who treads the high places of the earth—the Lord God of hosts is His name” (Amos 4:13). **C**

Christine Graef writes from Ellsworth, Maine, where she continues to explore God’s creation to ponder and reveal powerful Bible-based lessons that inspire others to pursue the wonders of His handiwork.



The appendages are designed for action, caring, and serving others.

CREATION DAY 6 PART TWO

■ BY BOB BLUM

The Creation of Humans

Filled with many literal or figurative counterparts, the Bible reveals God as both our Creator and our Redeemer. Counterparts expose two different systems that speak in different languages but operate on the same principles. As we examine the literal side of the natural world, we can envision character-building principles to live by. Jesus used this teaching method from the things He made like in the parable of the sower and the seed in Luke 8.

During the last part of day six of the Creation week, God performed His crowning act of Creation. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them Then God saw everything that

*"Then God said,
'Let Us make man
in Our image,
according to Our
likeness'"*



The cranial and spinal axial bones form the core.

He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:26–31).

A lot happened during the Creation week, and our studying deeper into a specific portion of His crowning act can be very edifying and spiritually uplifting. The human body is extremely complex, so starting at its core can guide us toward greater understanding of fundamental truths.

Our skeletal system provides the support structure and the foundation of the human body. It serves and protects us just like the laws of the land and the law of God. In fact, the Creator distributed the bones in our body so they correlate to the way He organized the Ten Commandments!

A normal human body contains

two hundred and six bones in two categories—axial and appendicular. The axial bones compose the central core of our body—the cranium and ear bones, sternum, rib cage, and spinal cord. The others make up our appendages—shoulder blades and clavicles, hip bones, arms and hands, legs and feet. Now if we compare them to the divine laws, which ones would be most aligned to the axial group—the first four commandments (love to God) or the last six (love to man)? The Bible tells us that Christ is the head of the body; so, that would be the axial group. (See Colossians 1:18.) What percent are the first four laws out of the Ten Commandments? Forty percent obviously, and the rest of the law (love to man) makes up the remaining 60 percent.

According to those who study



Shoulder blades and pelvic bones connect the core and appendages.

*So God created man
in His own image;
in the image
of God
He created him;*

bones, the six bones that comprise the hips and shoulder blades, clavicles, and hips form a special category because of their unique shapes, so that leaves two hundred bones. So, how many bones are in the axial portion of the skeletal system? Eighty bones, which is exactly 40 percent of 200. That leaves 120 bones or 60 percent in the appendicular group. Hence, the axial group is congruent to the first four commandments aimed at worship, and the appendicular group matches up with the remaining six commandments that relate to how we treat or serve our fellow humans—our outward actions.

But what about those other six oddly shaped bones? How do we categorize them? John 15:10, 12–17 tells us there is a second set of commandments that Jesus Himself laid down, in addition

to His Father's Ten Commandments. Referred to as *girdles*, these bones form connecting sites for the appendicular bones—the arms and legs. Both areas have the strongest muscles in our body attached to them. Both contain the only sets of ball and socket joints that form the most flexible joints in our body. Both sets are composed of unique *connecting* appendicular bones found nowhere else in the skeleton. So, it appears they could be considered a distinct and separate set. As we look at the two girdles, they have very much in common except the bones they attach to. So, we might expect the two commandments Jesus mentioned to also appear very similar.

In verse 12 Jesus said, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you” (KJV). Here we are



The three hearing bones (the hammer, anvil, and stirrup) in the middle ear behind the eardrum are the first to harden.

not spoken of as servants (to be told what to do and when) but rather as His friends called to mirror His example. Then in verses 17 and 20 He also tells us to love one another but speaks of us as servants! There will be times when we must serve our neighbor in ways Jesus commands us at the time. He is not only our Friend and Saviour; He is also our King and Lord both in the literal (physical) sense as well as in the figurative.

The Bible also addresses the timing when bones have changed from cartilage to osseous tissue that is ready to be used. The ossicles (the three hearing bones in the middle ear known as the hammer, anvil, and stirrup) are the first bones to ossify, and the Bible tells us when they are ready to start working.

Remember when Mary received

instructions from an angel to visit her cousin Elisabeth? The angel told Mary that Elisabeth was six months pregnant. Why would God record this detail in the Bible? A few verses later we learn that when Mary finally arrived and greeted her cousin, the baby leapt in her mother's womb when he heard Mary's voice! (See Luke 1:36, 41.) Those who specialize in fetal development say babies can start hearing when the ear bones begin to ossify (turn into real bones) at twenty-three to twenty-six weeks or around six months, which was during the time that Mary visited Elisabeth's home.

The first skeleton we have as a fetus in the womb differs markedly from the skeleton we have as an adult. Babies must be flexible enough to make it through the birth canal, but a deeper link

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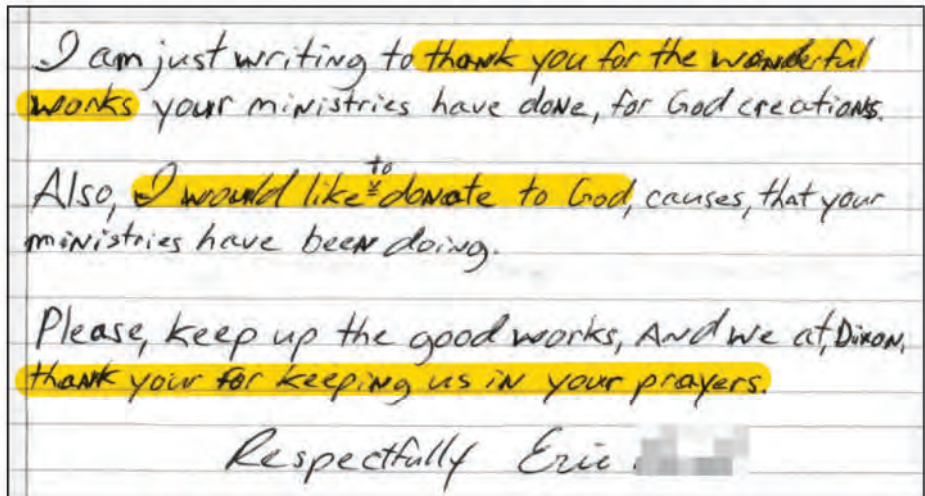
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–Matt. 25:36



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The soft cartilage of a fetus skeleton form in the womb and eventually harden through the years.

relates to becoming active and effective in the new-birth experience as a baby Christian. By twelve weeks a human fetus possesses a complete skeleton, but there is not yet a single bone in its body! The fetal skeleton is entirely connective tissue (principally hyaline cartilage with most of the skull and face consisting of fibrous membrane).

However, by adulthood nearly all the cartilage will be dissolved and replaced by more appropriate types of connective tissue. Only when cartilage is completely hardened (ossified), matured, and organized can our skeleton bear the greatest stress, endure the most extreme pressures, and fully perform its intended purposes. In fact, pound for pound bones are stronger than steel allowing them to withstand significant stress and force. As

we explore this transformation into such a sturdy and stalwart stature, we will begin to understand and appreciate how the law—the very character of God—becomes the foundation for all right actions.

It is no secret that newborns are weak, vulnerable, irresponsible, uncoordinated, of poor judgment, and incapable of serving others. But we love them still! However, we should not want anyone to long remain in that limited state but rather to grow in stature and in service as they become able. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 3:1–3, “I had to feed you milk, not solid food, because you were not ready for it” (GNB). Fortunately, God designed that during the infant, childhood, and teenage years the bones develop and grow. By twenty-five to thirty years of age the weak fetal skeleton has been completely

*male and female
He created them
Then God saw
everything that He
had made,*



The soft bone marrow produces red and white blood cells.

replaced with only a few minor areas yet to finish ossification.

In fact, Number 8:24 instructs, "'From twenty-five years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting.'" Additionally Numbers 4:3 says, "'From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.'" Should it surprise us then that Jesus would also begin His formal ministry at age thirty?

Furthermore, the red and white blood cells produced by the spongy marrow within the bones carries the vitalizing power of the body as well as the necessary materials for growth, repair, defense, and removing waste. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and

leads us toward the law-abiding Christ-like soul. (See 1 John 1:7.)

The whole process of transformation from cartilage to bone begins with a death, the death of an inflated cartilage cell. As soon as a cartilage cell uses up its reserves and dies, the contents are reabsorbed into the system, leaving an empty space. At this point the blood vessels grow into the newly formed gap bringing with it fresh life and an altogether new substance. Nature does not long tolerate a vacuum; so, if we do not invite Christ into our lives, another spirit will fill the empty space.

This dying process may help us better understand Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I die daily." The process of this most essential transformation is a continual dying off of



The hyoid bone floats in the neck to aid in swallowing and speaking.

*and indeed
it was very good.
So the evening
and the morning
were the sixth day."*

—Genesis 1:26–31

the old system to give space for the new. Dying daily does not mean starting at zero every day. It simply means a yielding for parts of our being to be open to the transformational process and continual growth toward righteousness—a building of grace upon grace and victory upon victory.

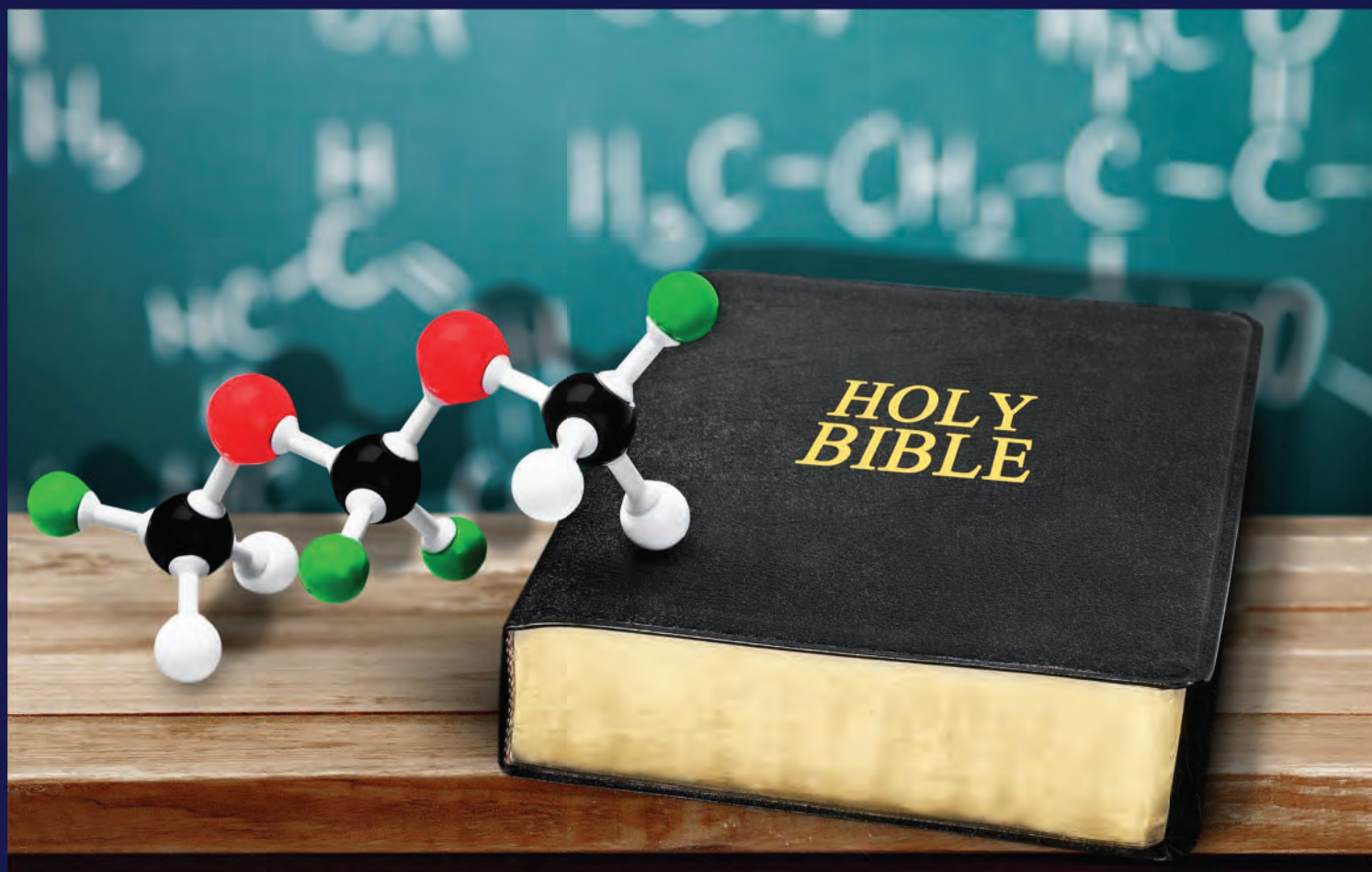
Fortunately, God has only begun His new creation in you. As soon as you give Him a little room by giving up your pride and self-sufficiency, He will fill it and bless you far beyond what you could ask or think. Furthermore, He will finish what He started as promised in Philippians 1:6, "That He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

But amid the commandment-based design of our skeleton, one bone stands

out from all the others—the only bone without a joint. That's right. It doesn't connect to any other bone. But if bones relate to the two groups of laws and joints define how we are to apply those laws, what good is this disconnected bone?

When God created our earth and everything in it, He gave purpose to everything, and part of that purpose is to teach us character-building lessons. Remember the lowly ant in Proverbs 6:6? Ants are mentioned only once in the Bible, yet even there, God tells us they have wisdom to impart to us if we consider them carefully.

Knowing this principle, the singular disconnected bone (called the hyoid bone) rests in the very vulnerable front part of our neck near some of the axial bones. Because this bone supports



The Bible and science work together to validate and illustrate the Creator's design and purposes.

our tongue and plays a key role in our speaking and swallowing, it directly impacts our learning and communication. Swallowing figuratively correlates to accepting new thoughts. Speaking is the act of sharing them with others. So, what set of laws does this singular bone represent? It is part of the first four *love to God* set that also includes acknowledging and respecting His natural laws like gravity, the seasons, etc.

Could all this just be a coincidence? These vital lessons revealed through our skeletal system created during God's crowning act on day six of the Creation week demonstrates how science and the Bible support each other. The Creator invites us to look at nature and the Bible as two volumes intended to speak in harmony though in different

languages that both originate from Him. He wishes to impart great wisdom to us beyond anything we can imagine as we discover that we definitely are fearfully and wonderfully made by His loving and benevolent hand that leads us to salvation! **C**

Bob Blum writes from Placerville, California. His literary contributions focus on understanding truth in its literal and figurative aspects—two languages that portray the total picture. His first published book, The Giant Code, can be found on Amazon.com with another book, The Creation Code, in the works.

CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

Providing capsules of research on Creation to encourage the pursuit of Bible-based convictions.

Dinosaur Bones in Canada

Palaeontologists have been excavating a massive deposit of dinosaur bones in Alberta, Canada. They estimate the bone bed contains over eight thousand individual adult and juvenile pachyrhinosauruses—a large herbivore similar to a triceratops but having a thick mass of bone on the nose rather than a horn. Scientists estimate adult pachyrhinosaurus grew to twenty feet long and weighed up to two tons.

The researchers believe the dinosaurs were a migrating herd buried by a sudden catastrophic flood. According to BBC News Science Focus May 2025, “All the evidence suggests that this catastrophic event was a flash flood—perhaps a storm over the mountains that sent an unstoppable torrent of water towards the herd, ripping trees from their roots and shifting boulders.” The scientists also noted, “Rocks found at the site show the swirls of sediment from the fast-flowing water churning everything up. It’s as if the destruction is frozen in time.”

Here at Creation Research we think it is good to see scientists admitting that such a massive fossil deposit had to be formed by rapid catastrophic processes rather than slow gradual burial. However, the size of this burial site and the size of the individual animals indicate a catastrophic flood involving masses of sediment far beyond anything observed in a tropical storm or a flash flood in today’s weather systems.

Condensed from *Science Updates* by Dr. Diane Eager, Science Reports editor with CreationResearch.net

Da Vinci Drawing and Dentistry

In the peer-reviewed academic *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts*, Dentist Rory Mac Sweeney published a paper that explains a mathematical code that was hiding in plain sight in the drawing of Vitruvian Man—a famous 1490 drawing by Leonardo da Vinci depicting ideal human proportions.

The triangle between the man’s legs, found in modern anatomy and known as the Bonwill’s triangle, is also used to explain how human jaws work in the most efficient way. It helps in dental designs and with

proper bite alignment. This triangle design produces a specific ratio of 1.64, which is almost identical to 1.633 that appears in nature.

Dr. Sweeney states, “What’s truly amazing is that this one drawing encapsulates a universal rule of design. It shows that the same blueprint nature uses for efficient design is at work in the ideal human body. Leonardo knew or sensed that our bodies are built with the same mathematical elegance as the universe around us.”

Here at Creation Illustrated Ministries, we believe the hand of the Creator is seen, not only in the mathematical designs in our bodies and throughout nature but in everything He created in the universe. **Condensed from the *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts*, June 26, 2025, and other articles on this discovery.**

Eye Design Refutes Evolution

Evolutionists such as Richard Dawkins have long claimed that our eyes are wired backwards, which no intelligent designer would do. The light receptor cells are behind the nerves that supposedly obstruct the light path.

In reality, researchers have shown that light doesn’t go through the nerves but is instead funneled through Müller glial cells. These act like a fiber-optic plate that increases image sharpness and separates out the three primary colors so that red and green light is funneled to the color-sensitive cones in the eye. The other type of light receptor rods are good for night vision but are weaker at detecting green and especially red light.

Dr. Erez Ribak, an astrophysicist who turned to studying eyes at the Israel Institute of Technology, has shown that the Müller cells must be just the right height and width to filter the different colors correctly and says, “If the retina is too thick or too thin, it’s not effective.” The sizes and densities of glial cells match the colors to which the eye is sensitive.

Condensed from a Creation Ministries International article, May 2025, creation.com



CREATION STEWARDSHIP

Providing helpful suggestions on how to better care for God's Creation.

Plastic Facts and Figures

The global production of plastics keeps increasing with about four hundred sixty million metric tons annually. When baby boomers were born in the 1950s, plastic production was about two million metric tons.

Twenty-two percent of plastics evade waste management systems and goes into uncontrolled dumpsites, gets burned in open pits, or litters water and land especially in countries that do not deal with waste properly. An estimated thirty million metric tons of plastic waste accumulate in oceans and another 109 million metric tons in rivers. Annual plastic waste per person varies from two hundred twenty-one kilograms in the United States to a hundred fourteen kilograms in Europe to sixty-nine kilograms for Japan and Korea.

Production of recycled plastics has quadrupled from 6.8 million metric tons in 2000 to 29 million metric tons in 2019, which was still only six percent of the total plastic production back then. European countries lead the way with recycled plastic at fourteen percent, China at thirteen percent, and the US at only four percent.

The effects of microplastics on the environment and human health is increasing, and particles have been detected in the air, water, food, as well as in both animals and humans with potential reproduction harm, hormone disruption, cardiovascular issues, increased inflammation, lung and colon cancers, cognitive decline, and neurological damage.

Tips for Simple Living

Here are some suggestions to help decrease your exposure of microplastics.

1. Do not microwave plastic that can release chemicals.
2. Avoid using plastic water bottles.
3. Store food in glass and non-plastic containers.
4. Replacing plastic cutting boards and cooking utensils with wooded ones.
5. Have good HEPA filters on your vacuum that help control the microplastics in the air we breathe.
6. Removing microplastics from water can be done

by boiling and filtering it with a coffee filter, which can remove up to ninety percent, while some reverse osmosis systems can reportedly remove more than ninety-nine percent.

Biblical Stewardship of Creation

The Bible begins with God creating a good and abundant world with every plant, creature, and ecosystem being declared "very good" (Genesis 1:31, ESV) revealing divine delight in a balanced habitat. In Genesis 2:15, humans are placed in the garden to "work it and keep it" (ESV), indicating an entrusted stewardship.

Pollution disrupts that original harmony and reflects a departure from God's intent. Recognizing creation's intrinsic value encourages our commitment to remove toxins like microplastics from air, water, and soil.

Our mandate extends beyond care for plants and animals. The Jewish tradition teaches one to care for our planet in order to preserve that which God has created. Psalm 24:1 proclaims, "the earth is the Lord's" (ESV) inviting us to honor the Creator by protecting His creation. Proverbs 12:10 shows righteous individuals look after their animals, which extends to all creatures affected by pollution. Isaiah 24:5 warns, "The earth is defiled by its people" (NIV), reminding us that unchecked waste brings spiritual and physical consequences. In light of these truths, cleaning our environment becomes an act of obedience, ethics, and worship.

Romans 8:19–22 describes creation groaning under bondage and awaiting liberation. Cleaning polluted rivers and reducing plastic waste align with the gospel's hope of renewal. Prayer can accompany practical measures by asking God to heal the land and guide our innovations toward sustainability. When we restore ecosystems, we participate in a storyline that began in Eden and culminates in a new heaven and earth where tears, decay, and pollution will be no more.



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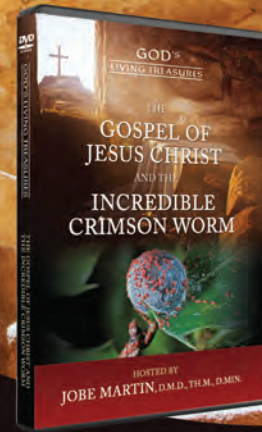


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Clifty Falls

A L E N S O N C R E A T I O N



Bobby Harrison

Cape May warbler

Indiana's Clifty Falls State Park hearkens visitors to its picturesque splendor with dramatic canyons, cascading waterfalls, and lush forests—a

true testament of God's stunning creation! For the contemplative soul, such grandeur presents more than just a gorgeous landscape; it stands as an outdoor sanctuary.

For the bird watcher, the park on the southeastern border of Indiana provides a living parable of God's watchful care and boundless artistry. While traversing the rugged trails of Clifty Falls, the diverse avian life becomes a powerful reminder of God's love and providence. The diverse habitats created within the various ecosystems support a wide array of bird species.

In the dense undergrowth, you might find a secretive ovenbird whose loud, repetitive song fills the forest. Near the water, belted kingfishers dart by with their shaggy crests and rattling calls. Even the common American

robin and northern cardinal with their familiar songs and vibrant colors contribute to the symphony of life reminding us that beauty and grace can be found even in nonexotic species. Each unique call and feather pattern of the Creator's winged creatures speak of His artistic expression and delight in diversity.

To everyone's joy, it is not uncommon to see bald eagles soaring effortlessly above the deep gorges as the stately raptors seem to survey all that is below them with diligent watchfulness. In Scripture the omnipresence and constant awareness of God are often depicted. Psalm 139:7–10 asks, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast" (NIV). Just as the eagle oversees the landscape, so, too, does our heavenly Father constantly watch over us knowing every step, every thought, and every need.

Hiking through the woodlands in early spring, you might hear the distinctive call of the blue-headed vireo, spot the vibrant hues of a scarlet tanager, or glimpse a cape may warbler flitting through the canopy. The myriad



Bobby Harrison

White-breasted nuthatch

State Park

B Y B O B B Y H A R R I S O N

of migratory birds also remind us of God's meticulous design and provision. Each species is perfectly adapted to its environment and witnesses about our Lord's creative wisdom.

Summer brings a more settled but no less interesting birding season. The dense undergrowth of the younger forests offers the perfect place to find white-eyed vireo, prairie warblers, and indigo buntings. If you're lucky, you might catch a peek of the occasional American woodcock strutting across a clearing. Year-round residents like the red-shouldered hawks, wild turkeys, and brown thrashers also provide common sightings, especially during the warmer months as they raise their young and hunt in the park's mature forests.

Even in the cooler months, Clifty Falls displays God's enduring faithfulness. You might spot a resilient red-bellied woodpecker or a white-breasted nuthatch demonstrating the avian persistent presence amidst changing seasons. Such rigor mirrors the steadfastness of God's promises, which remain true regardless of our circumstances. Just as the birds find sustenance and shelter in every season, we, too, can find refuge and renewal in God's unfailing ever-present love, compassion, guidance, protection, and providence.

We can embrace the



Bobby Harrison

Blue-headed vireo

promises of Psalm 36:5-7 with the birds. "Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O Lord, You preserve man and beast. How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings."

Clifty Falls imparts an amazing experience where you can become immersed in the natural wonders of God's creation—a place where an avian symphony and the effortless flight of its inhabitants draw your heart heavenward while reminding you of our Creator who truly cares for every feathered friend and every precious soul. **C**

Bobby Harrison writes from

Huntsville, Alabama, as a retired associate professor of photography. Explore more of his amazing work and travels around the country at: www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com



Bobby Harrison

Prairie warbler



Through my time of being homeless I learned what it meant to be like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who slept under the stars and had the Lord as their protection and their covering in the night. When I bedded down under the night sky, heavenly activity from the different stages of the moon to the twinkling of the stars captured my attention. Truly, “day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they

reveal knowledge” (Psalms 19:2, NIV).

Having to sleep under the shroud of the darkness reminded me of the story of Jacob when he slept with his head resting on a rock, dreamed of a ladder leading to heaven, and awoke to the revelation of the house of God in that very place he called Bethel.

Sudden movements and sounds often startled me and kept me awake. The screeching of owls, the spiders attempting to

crawl on me, and other surprises served as reminders to be alert, to be self-controlled, and to “be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” as we are warned in 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV).

The sound of raccoons skittering through urban areas trying to scavenge morsels of food in trash cans taught me how God lets nothing go to waste. There were also nights when



Homeless Under Heaven

opossums made a harsh shrieking noise if I inadvertently got too close—a sharp reminder that God created certain creatures to have defense mechanisms to ward off predators. Howling packs of coyotes on their ventures through the night underscored the caution in Matthew 7:6 to “not give dogs what is sacred. . . . If you do, they may . . . turn and tear you to pieces” (NIV).

Enduring long nights without a home taught me the

importance of trusting God. In the darkness filled with the glowing moon and shimmering stars, meteors and satellites could be seen darting across the vast night sky and showed “the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1, NIV). And the uncertainty of what might happen when the sun rose taught me “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me” (Psalms 23:4). Indeed, Psalms

30:5 promises, “His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” as God fulfills what He intends to do in His perfect timing.

During my many travels in the desert, I experienced times similar to the prophet Isaiah when God made ways in the wilderness and streams flowing in the desert. Down the long, hot desert roads of California, I gained greater appreciation to forget about the former things and not



Wild creatures like raccoons present challenges even in urban areas.

dwelt in the past. God was always doing something new in my life, and I need only to perceive and recognize it despite my weariness.

At certain times homeless people need to find shelter from stormy rains during the night, and they would seek refuge under bridges and highways. Cold autumn, winter, and spring showers compounded the hunger, thirst, and need of a warm blanket. Such rain pouring during the night sparked thoughts of James 5:7 about the farmers who patiently wait for the autumn and spring rains to reap the treasures of the earth.

So many dazzling rainbows emerged from those storms as well, pointing to Genesis 9:13 and God's promised covenant with man. The showers also brought an uplifting

assortment of flowers blooming, butterflies emerging, and chirping lovebirds gathering together to nest amid the first days of spring.

On a less appealing note, I met multiple species of snakes

along my homeless journey. One was a grayish-black garden snake hiding near the edge of a bush that was hard to see and startled me for a moment. Another was a brownish tan one cleverly camouflaged against the brown earth on a hot summer afternoon. These slithering reptiles posed a firm reminder of Matthew 10:16 to "be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves" (NASB)—to keep an eye out for danger, to be alert, self-controlled, and of a sober mind as commanded in 1 Peter 5:8.

Red-tailed hawks, crows, and ravens were prevalent throughout the areas I traveled. The Lord feeds the crows and ravens with their portion, yet Job 28:7 reveals that even birds of prey with their precision vision cannot discern the path of wisdom that is available to those who follow God's leading by faith.

I once came upon a man-made lake that attracted a large flock of Canada geese. It was amazing to see so many geese



Bridges and other cement structures offer temporary relief from some elements.



God provides hope and vital life lessons to those who turn to Him even in difficult situations.

and all their goslings among the other water fowl and how the Lord apportioned their dwelling place as spoken in Isaiah 34:16. "None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together" (NIVUK).

But whether a person is homeless or not, it is Matthew 6:25–34 that provides the faith-building solace of His providence and unfathomable love. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own" (NIV).

So many different nature sightings all around us reveal His grace, compassion, and charity even to those who endure homelessness. And to be able to come out of such an experience and give glory to God for all of the challenges and blessings should give everyone a greater appreciation for Creation and for the depth of love from its Creator who proclaims, "I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward" (Genesis 15:1). **C**

Jordan Zuniga writes from Santee, California, where he develops poetry, devotionals, and creative stories that have appeared in a number of publications and on podcasts all aimed at sharing his faith and revealing God's glory.



Geometric garden shapes create inviting spaces in Timișoara, Romania.

global garden

As fall's golden sunlight shines through aged trees and the ground hints at winter's soon arrival, many gardeners long for humanity's first home—the Garden of Eden. From the exact shapes of Persian paradise gardens to the artsy beauty of Monet's Giverny, gardens all over the world reveal the desire to create a version of that perfect place where God once spent time walking with His children.

"The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (Genesis 2:8, 9). This original heavenly plan has inspired many horticulturalists to build spaces that echo paradise's splendor with each plot pointing toward God's intended plan, as well as humankind's longing for renewal and restoration.

In ancient Persia (now Iran) garden designers came up with what UNESCO sees as

gardens from eden



The Persian Naqsh-e Jahan Square gardens in front of the Royal Mosque in Isfahan, Iran, offer Edenic solace to visitors.

designs

the most long-lasting garden idea in human history—the *Chahar Bagh* (or four gardens). These stunning spaces, which go back to Cyrus the Great during the 6th century BC, were created to represent paradise and include the four *Zoroastrian* elements: sky, earth, water, and plants.

The Persian garden's unique four-part layout reflects the Bible's account of Eden's four rivers: "Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads" (Genesis 2:10). Water plays a dual role as a garden's vital life force and its most revered decoration streaming through channels that split the area into flawless geometric portions. People dreamed up these gardens as heavenly spots on earth as enclosed spaces where the harsh desert surroundings gave way to shady spots, running water, and thriving life.

When you walk through these gardens today, you'll grasp the meaning of the Persian word *pardis*, which led to our English word *paradise*. The right mix of buildings, plants, and

by sara irandokht



Water features are typical in monastery gardens like this one in Catalonia, Spain.

water create microclimates that turn bare land into green havens. Each part serves both daily life and spiritual enrichment by demonstrating how God's creation works and looks amazing.

If you visit Persian gardens in the fall, you'll see dazzling changes as old plane trees and pomegranates turn gold and red. Their colors reflect and dance on the surface of pools under the changing sky. These gardens prove that when people create in accordance with God's design, they can make places that are good for both body and soul.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Christian monks in Europe created cloister gardens that functioned as outdoor chapels by providing areas to reflect, pray, and connect with God. These walled-off gardens often included a well or fountain at their center that were crafted to mirror the celestial Jerusalem mentioned in the book of Revelation.

The medieval *hortus conclusus* (or enclosed garden) took its cue from Song of Solomon 4:12: "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (KJV). These holy spots mixed practical herb growing with spiritual meaning to offer places where worship and work came together. Monks knew that caring for God's creation was a form of worship itself—cooperating with the Creator to help life flourish.

In monastery gardens across Europe from England to Italy, geometric plots bursting with healing herbs, vegetables, and blooms created living Bibles that taught of God's care and love. The thoughtful layout of plants based on their uses—for cooking, healing, and symbolism—pointed to the heavenly order that rules all Creation. Apple trees made visitors think of humanity's downfall while beds of lilies symbolized purity and hope for new life.

As fall comes to these old gardens, ancient trees loaded with fruit remind visitors of God's bountiful providence. The shifting seasons act as natural calendars marking time, not by



Tightly manicured Japanese gardens use stonework and ponds to highlight contrasting and intriguing colors and textures.

human schedules but by heavenly rhythms orchestrated by the Creator.

In Japan, garden design developed from the culture but also incorporated spiritual ideas. Japanese gardens focus on harmony, balance, and reflection. The Japanese create spaces that encourage people to think about nature and life's deeper meanings. These gardens have roots in Buddhist and Shinto traditions; yet, they show that all humans recognize outdoor spaces, and nature can help people connect with the divine.

Japanese gardeners place stones, water, and plants in patterns that shows they understand how God's creation follows certain laws and relationships. These gardens also change with the seasons, which echoes the Bible verse "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, KJV).

Claude Monet's garden at Giverny, France, shows a fresh take on humanity's yearning for paradise. The renowned impressionist painter designed two separate Edenic gardens—a structured flower garden close to his home and the water garden with its famous lily pond. Monet knew gardens offer more than just pretty sights; they promote spiritual renewal and spark creativity.

The artist paid close attention to color, texture, and seasonal changes that turned his gardens into a living artistic masterpiece that adapted and transformed throughout the year. His water garden, complete with a Japanese bridge and lily pads, showed how human creativity can boost nature's beauty without taking over. Autumn at Giverny displays amazing hues as the artist's well-planned flower sequence hits its peak before winter sets in.

Monet's garden diaries show how much he valued the everyday wonders in his outdoor haven. He wrote about watching the light shift during the day and seeing how morning fog



Monet's famed lily pond and loosely designed garden inspire contemplation and creativity at his home in Giverny, France.

turned familiar views into new discoveries. His garden became a sacred space, though he might not have used spiritual words to describe it.

Gardeners today carry on the age-old practice of designing spaces that try to radiate a balance of diverse heavenly splendor with carefully planned structure. Whether they care for little city gardens or big country fields, horticulturalists take part in the ordained task of regular cultivation that God first assigned to Adam.

Botanical gardens across the globe now act as living archives of God's massively diverse plant kingdom in an effort to safeguard certain species while teaching visitors about the complex interdependence found in Creation. These Creation caretakers understand that gardens do more than just look pretty—they link people to the Creator.

Gardens help us learn spiritual lessons to be patient as Jesus showed in His parable about seeds and how things grow. "And He said, 'The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how'" (Mark 4:26, 27). Every person who tends a garden discovers this truth firsthand. We plant, we water, we cultivate, but God makes them grow.

Getting your hands dirty and working with the changing seasons teaches a vital Christ-like character trait—humility. People who garden realize that at the behest of things they can't control—the weather, pests, and the mysterious life force and DNA molecules that turn tiny seeds into beautiful flowering plants. This reliance on God's all-wise design helps to build trust and appreciation toward His providence.

Gardens also show us how to cultivate and nurture hope while bringing dormant or



Dazzling garden designs help instill hope as springtime's restoration attracts families to the tulip festival in Istanbul, Turkey.

neglected spaces back to life. Even the most forgotten piece of land can change with proper attention and care and planning. Soil that looks dead in winter bursts with life in spring, reminding us that the Creator specializes in restoration, transformation, and resurrection to make all things new.

As fall introduces a pause to ponder the waning growing season and anticipate the one to come, gardeners around the world utilize winter's break to plan next year's perfect garden. Whether they're planting bulbs for spring in the cool November air or ordering seeds to plant in seedling cups, gardeners personify hope. With the certainty that life will come back, elegant flowers will bloom again, and fruit will be harvested again, they hold fast to the Creator's promises amid the changing seasons.

The Bible says Jesus will come back to make a new heaven and earth—Eden restored. There, “the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month” will grow by the river of life (Revelation 22:2). For now, gardens worldwide give us a peek at that glory—a foretaste of the paradise God promises to those who believe in His everlasting love and eternal plan.

In our backyards, public parks, and botanical masterpieces we must retain the practice of making places where heaven meets earth to inspire worship and the wonder of the Creator. Every garden, no matter how small, reveals the hand of the divine Gardener who first planted paradise and promises to bring it back again. **C**

Sara Irandokht writes from Warwick, New York, where she enjoys exploring Creation in order to glean vital lessons worth sharing with those who long for Eden restored.

Genesis Cuisine

Awesome Orbs

"See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food."

"And you shall eat the herb of the field."

—Genesis 1:29, 3:18



Recipes by Jennifer Ish. Photos by Tom Ish



Walnut Pesto Appetizer Balls

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Tb. flax meal | 2 Tb. lemon juice |
| 2 Tb. water | 1/2 tsp. salt, or to taste |
| 1/2 C. walnuts | 2 Tb. nutritional yeast |
| 2 C. fresh basil leaves, chopped | 1/2 tsp. baking soda |
| 4 Tb. olive oil | 1 can garbanzos drained and dried |
| 2 garlic cloves | 1/2 C. panko |

Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until mixed into a meal that can easily be formed into small balls. Place balls into a skillet and lightly brown for 5 minutes over medium heat. Transfer to a baking tray, and bake for an additional 15 to 20 minutes at 350 degrees. Garnish with small basil leaves, sliced cherry tomatoes, and toothpicks. Serve with dipping sauces like marinara, pesto, ranch dressing, or other favorites.



Swedish Meatless Balls – Köttbuller

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1/2 C. lentils, cooked al dente | Gravy: |
| 1 C. cremini mushrooms, minced | 1 onion, chopped and sautéed |
| 1/2 C. hazel nuts, coarsely milled | 4 Tb. vegan butter, melted |
| 1/2 C. rolled oats, coarsely milled | 4 Tb. flour, browned slightly |
| 1 Tb. flax meal with 2 Tb. water | 2 1/2 C. vegetable bouillon broth |
| 1/2 tsp. ea. allspice and nutmeg | 1 Tb. liquid aminos |
| 1/2 C. vegetable bouillon broth | 1 can coconut milk |
| 2 tsp. lemon juice | a pinch of allspice and nutmeg |
| 1/4 C. parsley | |

Place all nine ingredients into a food processor and pulse until mixed into coarse crumbs. Form into one-inch balls. Place on a baking tray and bake at 350 degrees for 25 min. until brown. In a skillet, sauté onion 5 min. until soft. Add other ingredients stirring well until thickened. Serve meatless balls with traditional lingonberry jam (or cranberries), quick cucumber pickles, boiled potatoes, gravy, and chopped parsley.



Pumpkin-Chai Dessert Balls

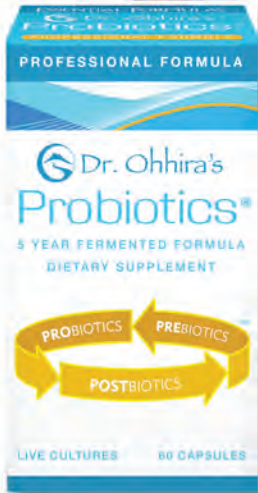
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| 1/2 C. pumpkin puree | 1/2 C. pecans, chopped |
| 4 medjool dates | 1 tsp. pumpkin pie seasoning |
| 1/3 C. dried apricots, chopped fine | 1/2 tsp. cardamon |
| 1/3 C. rolled oats, milled fine | 1/2 tsp. cloves |
| 1/4 C. vanilla vegan protein powder | 1/8 tsp. turmeric |
| | salt to taste |

Soften dates and apricots in hot water, drain, and mix in a food processor until chopped fine. Add vanilla protein powder, oats, and pecans and mix well until blended. Place mixture in a bowl and form into balls. Press a pecan half or pumpkin seeds on top. Enjoy for a quick on-the-go snack or a simple dessert.

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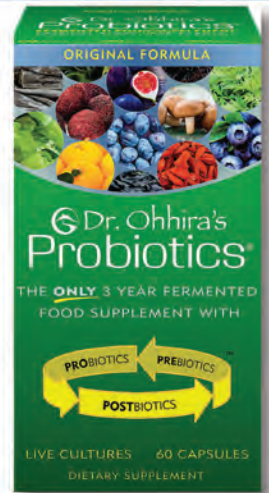
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The leaves fall from the trees; the days grow shorter; the season arrives for nature to rest; but we went out in our garden ready to plant anyway.

"But why?" my daughter asked. "Soon there will be snow, and nothing grows in winter."

I explained that some seeds and bulbs need to

sit in the ground during the cold weather so they can sprout and bloom when spring arrives. So, we planted tulip bulbs, daffodils, and milkweed seeds.

"Oh, that makes sense, but what does having them sit in the ground do anyway?" she wondered. "Why do they have to be buried so long before they grow?"



Fall Planting

"Seeds and bulbs have outer coverings, and some of them need a time of cold, moist conditions to germinate and sprout new life. The cold and wet helps soften and break down the covering so they can begin to grow when springtime comes. That's when the seeds and bulbs start to feel the warmth of earth and sprout up through the ground and sometimes





one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (NIV). Winter is often viewed as a time when the earth sleeps, animals hibernate, and plants go dormant. The world outside on a winter day is a lot quieter than during the summer; yet, even in the calm, cold, stark months creation is at work.

"You remember the Creation story, right?" I asked my daughter.

"Yes, God created everything in six days and on the seventh day He rested," she recited.

"That's right, but do you think God needed to rest, or He was doing nothing on that day?" I continued.

"No, He didn't need rest, but I guess I never thought about what He was doing on that day. Why do we even have a day of rest?"

Genesis 2: 1-3 tells us, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

"Think back to Creation week and what the Bible says," I suggested. "God was finished with His work, and He blessed the day, but a day of rest is more than just napping or taking it easy. It's a day set aside to worship our Creator, give Him thanks for all He has done, and to enjoy all of the wonderful nature that He

even break through the remaining melting snow."

We continued to dig shallow holes and place the bulbs and seeds in them. My daughter filled the water can and watered the little brown orbs well.

"I can already imagine how beautiful these will be," I said.

"I understand that the seed and bulb coatings need to soften to sprout, but why underground in the winter?" she asked.

"Since God created the earth to have different seasons and temperatures, some plants were designed with thick shells around their seeds so they will grow at the right time. If they were to just grow as soon as they got planted, the green stems would freeze and die before any flowers could bloom. Also, when the bees become active again and other insects hatch, they need food, and these seeds and bulbs planted in late fall will bloom in early spring providing nectar and food for the bugs and bees."

Ecclesiastes 3:11 explains this part of God's plan. "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no





Planning ahead, planting, and stewardship of God's creation results in stunning floral displays in the spring.

created for us. It's truly a blessing to get to know our Creator God in this way, which is why we go to church and spend time outdoors," I added.

"We've been reading through Genesis and learned about stewardship," my daughter excitedly shared.

I smiled, "What is stewardship?"

"Well, it's taking care of Creation like the animals, the environment, and even ourselves and others," she explained. "Since God created it all, we should take care of it. It's a way to show reverence to Him."

1 Peter 4:10 encourages us, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (ESV).

When we were done planting, we stood back and admired our efforts. "It's going to be a long wait to see our flowers bloom," my daughter said.

"Yes it will, but now we can rest from our work," I said. "We should be satisfied with all that we accomplished and the beauty, joy, and benefits it will bring."

"It feels good being a good steward and getting the job done," my daughter added.

This lesson she learned about caring and being productive actually comes from Genesis 2:15. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the

garden of Eden to work it and keep it" (ESV). We were created to work and care for God's creation. In caring for creation, we show honor to God as explained in Colossians 3:23. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (NIV).

Job 12:7-10 instructs how much we can learn by exploring and working with Creation. "But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being" (NRSV).

"So, Mom," my daughter said, "I'm part of Creation, and I'm getting hungry; so, how about a snack to care for our part of Creation?"

We chuckled as we went inside to enjoy something tasty. **C**

Stephanie Mathews writes from Tremonton, Utah, where she works as a librarian. She enjoys her days off reading and writing often about Creation and has had stories, poetry, and devotions published. She spends time outdoors doing anything from gardening to walking to star-gazing and camping.



In The Rain

Wherever rain falls there is abundant life. Rain forests receive some eighty inches per year and produce giant trees that grow over two hundred feet tall. Consider a normal forest in a gentle rain. Duck your head under the branches of a birch tree, while it rains.

Close your eyes and listen to the sound of the rain. Hear the sh-sh-sh-sh sound? That natural relaxing piece of music is called white sound. Each note is produced by a single drop of rain falling upon a single leaf. Like listening to rain, hearing kind words spoken, such as please, thank you, and may I, gladden the heart of a family.

With the eyes open, watch the drops land with a splat on the leaf. What does the leaf do? Bend? Can you hear the sound at the same time as rain hits the leaf?

As the rain falls, take a sniff and notice the forest perfume. The rain washes dust from the

air, and little odors that are there all the time become dominant. The spicy fragrance of balsam and fir combine with birch and cedar to make an intoxicating elixir. The air is cool, yet not cold, and has an earthy smell, but not a dirty one. The air is fresh and vibrant with life.

"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth . . . So shall my word be that goes forth out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" Isaiah 55:10, 11.

God wants to water our hearts with His word like He does the world with rain. That Word received into our hearts will wash away the dust of selfishness, leaving us fragrant with His dynamic Life. With motives washed clean, we can perfume our world with the fragrance of His love.



PRACTICAL PROJECT:

As a family, with rain coats on, take a walk in the woods in a gentle rain. CAUTION: Not in a lightning and thunder storm. Stand beneath the trees. Close your eyes and listen. Count the number of tunes that you hear. Count the number of odors that you smell. When the sun comes out after the storm, count the different colors in the little droplets that rest on the shiny tops of the leaves. How many inches of courtesy did your family receive today?



This character-building lesson was excerpted from *The Gospel According to a Tree* book by Terry and Jean McComb as part of their series of *Gospel According to . . .* books. Check them out in our store at: CreationIllustrated.com



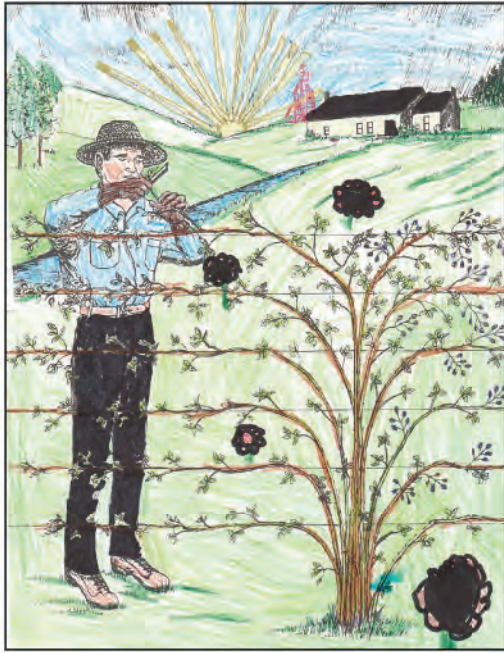


Fall 2025 Coloring Contest First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____

(deadline & details on following page) City: _____ State/Prov. _____

Be sure to add your own creative background, features, and creatures to make your picture unique, interesting, and artistic!

Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest



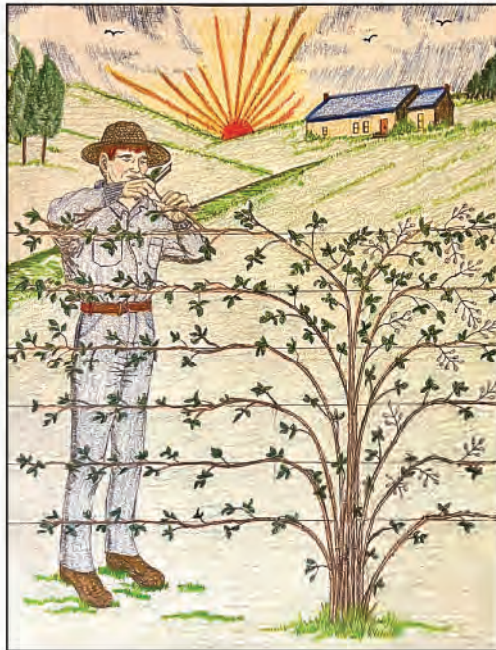
First Place, ages 6–11

*Daniel B., age 7,
Newton, Kansas*



First Place, ages 12–18

*Silje P., age 14,
Milaca, Minnesota*



First Place, ages 19+

*Anita L., age 77,
Thompsonville, Illinois*

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest for ALL Ages!** Color in the picture on the previous page from the Character-Building Lesson. You can even add other creatures, clouds, sky, etc. Then scan or photograph your work (maximum one per quarter) and email an attached jpeg to: coloring@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Coloring Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The **DEADLINE for fall 2025 entries is November 15, 2025.** Your work will be uploaded to our Web site where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of December from fall-edition pictures, the first week of March from winter-edition pictures, the first week of June from spring-edition pictures, and the first week of September from summer-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com

Creation Illustrated Photo Contest

Winners From Summer 2025 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Abby S., age 11, of Berrien Center, Michigan, took this picture.

First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

Caleb C., age 16, of Alexander, North Dakota, wrote: "This picture was taken at sunset in the Lofoten Islands, Norway. Like many other views to be seen in the islands, the fjord and mountains were serenely beautiful and peaceful."



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Joshua D., age 24, of Jacksonville, Florida, took this photo of a total solar eclipse with solar prominences and quoted Psalm 8:3, "I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained."

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Photo Contest for ALL Ages!** Get creative with your camera in nature and email an attached jpeg (maximum one per quarter) to: photos@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Photo Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address and one or two sentences on what your photo says about our Creator. The **DEADLINE for fall 2025 entries is November 15, 2025**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of December from fall submissions, the first week of March from winter submissions, the first week of June from spring submissions, and the first week of September from summer submissions. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com



STUDY GUIDE

for *Creation Illustrated*, Fall 2025 Edition, Vol. 32, No. 3

This instructional guide is designed to help readers of all ages integrate practical spiritual lessons available through the study of God's handiwork. Studying nature will help lead individuals to a personal, awe-inspiring relationship with Jesus Christ, the Author of Creation.

I. Creation Up Close—"Benevolent Birch Trees" story, pages 6–11

1. What is the nickname for the birch tree? Why does birch wood make great firewood? p. 6
2. List the many ways birch trees are useful. What is the sap of birch trees used for? pp. 6, 7
3. How many years does it take for a birch to mature and develop its famous bark colorings? p. 8
4. Describe the growth characteristics of the water birch and how it relates to 1 Corinthians 1:10. pp. 8, 9
5. Explain how birches are indispensable and serve as a food source for animals. p. 9
6. What are some of the spiritual insights we can learn from the birch trees? p. 10

II. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—"Eager Beavers" story, pages 12–19

1. Explain the beaver's swimming skills and how far they can swim under water. p. 14
2. How are beavers able to carry things in their teeth and eat without getting a mouthful of water? p. 14
3. Explain how a beaver's teeth grow. What coating helps them be strong? p. 14
4. How long is the largest beaver dam? How much water does the pond created by it contain? p. 17
5. What type of family life do beavers have? What lessons can we learn from them? p. 18
6. List the key attributes of beavers that offer life examples for us. pp. 13–18

III. Re-Creation Outdoors—"Acadia National Park" story, pages 20–27

1. Where is the highest point in the United States along the Atlantic coast? p. 20
2. Who are "the people of the dawnland?" How did they come to this area, and what did they do? p. 20
3. How many acres is the Acadia National Park? How many miles of trails does it offer? p. 20
4. Describe some of the many highlights there are to see and experience at Acadia. pp. 20–27
5. List some of the many references in Scripture that talk about the mountains. pp. 25, 26

IV. The Creation Week—"Creation Day 6, Part 2—The Creation of Humans" story, pages 28–37

1. How many bones does the body contain? p. 29
2. What two categories are these bones divided into? p. 29
3. When you divide the Ten Commandments into two parts, the first _____ are love to _____, and the last _____ are love to _____.
4. What are the two groups of bones that correlate to the Ten Commandments? pp. 29, 30
5. Explain the six oddly shaped bones and how they are categorized. Read John 15:10, 12–17. What does Jesus call us to do? pp. 30, 31
6. What bones are the first to fully develop and ossify or turn hard? How does the story of Mary in Luke 1:36, 41 confirm this? p. 31
7. Pound for pound bones are stronger than what? How does this strength help us better understand God's character and His law? pp. 34, 35
8. Explain the important role the hyoid bone plays. What set of laws does it represent? p. 37

Family Fun Fall Activities

Autumn provides a golden invitation to step outside and savor the season's beauty together as a family. Whether you're surrounded by towering birch trees with their amber leaves in your backyard or crunching through fallen pine needles and cones in the woods, this season offers countless ways to connect as a family while soaking in nature's splendor.

Start with a leaf scavenger hunt. Equip each family member with a bag and a list of leaf shapes or colors to find. It's a fun way to explore tree diversity and spark curiosity about why each tree is different. See who can identify each leaf with the correct tree name. Seek out parks, arboretums, or forests as good places that have a variety of deciduous trees. Don't forget to take along a tree identification book.

Autumn is also a nice time to reach out to shut-ins and neighbors with a special gift of caring for Thanksgiving. Visit local orchards for apple and pumpkin picking. See if any farms offer hayrides, corn mazes, or petting zoos to turn a simple outing into a full family fun day!

After your harvest of goodies, plan a time when your family can make homemade applesauce, minipies, and dessert breads. Wrap and decorate these gifts and attach an encouraging scripture note. Schedule a time to deliver the gifts throughout the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving.

For quieter moments, take a nature walk during the peak splendor of the fall foliage. Use sketchbooks, leaf presses, and cameras to capture the wonders of the changing landscape. Have fun creating pinecone bird feeders with peanut butter and seeds. Fall evenings are perfect for a bonfire, to sing, roast corn, and stargaze under the crisp skies. Watch for a meteor shower October 21, 22. On November 5, the *Beaver Moon* will be the closest full moon to the earth for the entire year! The *Cold Moon* on December 4 is the last supermoon of the year. The fall memories you make outdoors will linger like the scent of woodsmoke and cinnamon!



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WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

The puzzle at the left contains words that are associated with this edition of *Creation Illustrated*. Simply find the words listed below and circle them. They can be spelled backward, forward, up, down, or diagonally. When you are finished, try to find the story or other part of the magazine from which each word came.

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. ACADIA | 11. ISLAND |
| 2. BARK | 12. LAW |
| 3. BEAVERS | 13. LODGE |
| 4. BETULIN | 14. MUD |
| 5. BIRCH | 15. NUTLETS |
| 6. BONES | 16. OSSIFY |
| 7. CATKINS | 17. PELTS |
| 8. DAMS | 18. SAP |
| 9. ENGINEER | 19. SKELETON |
| 10. HYOID | 20. TAIL |

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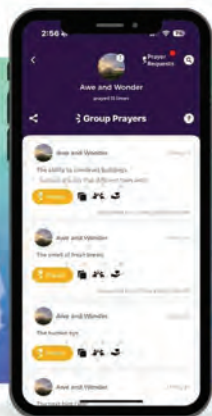
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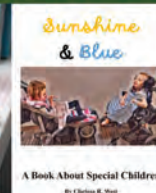
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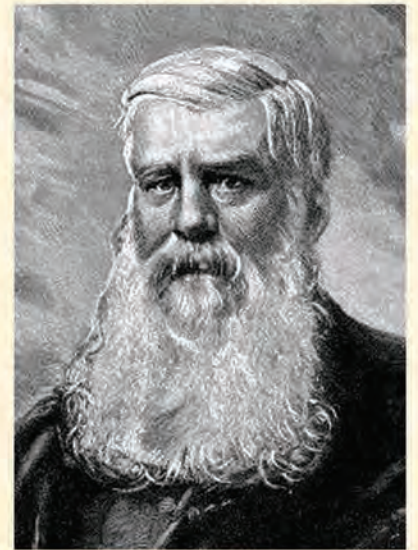
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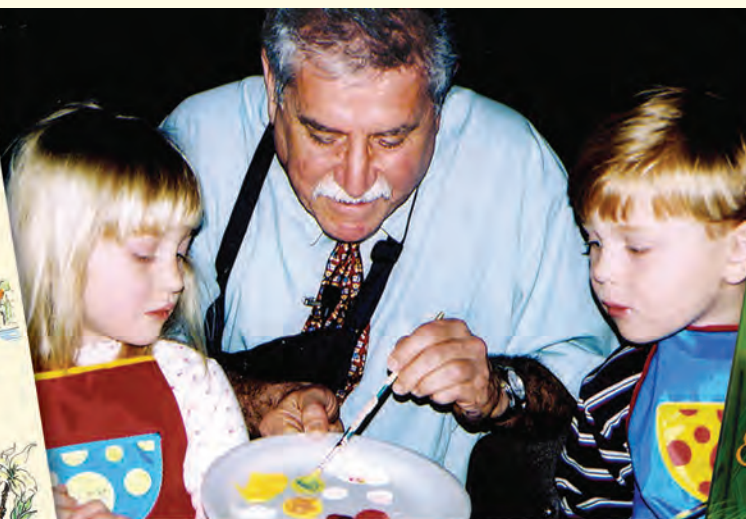
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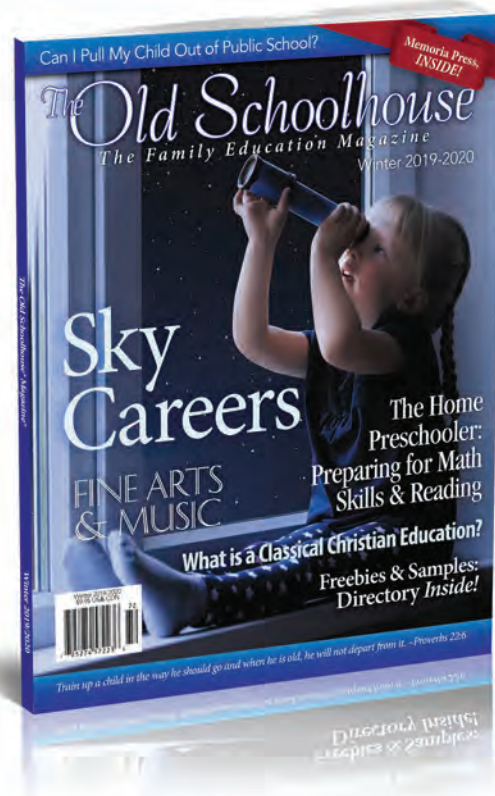
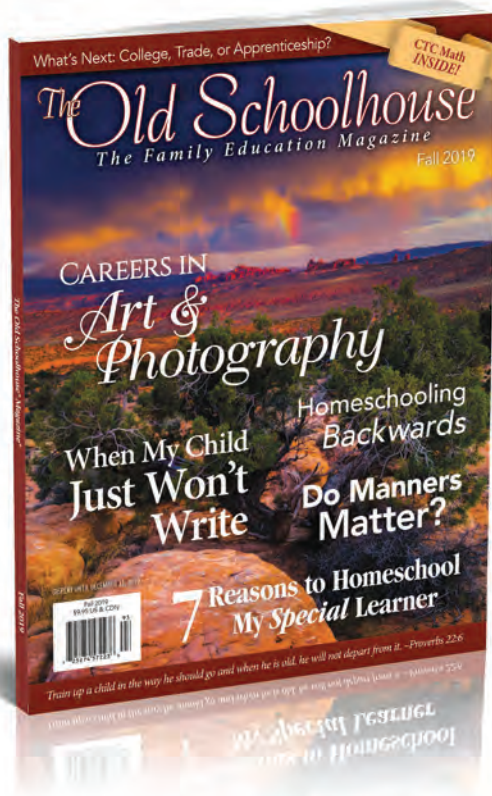
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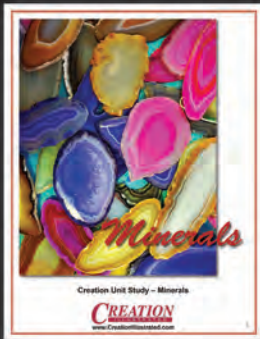
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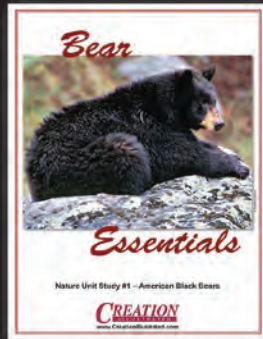


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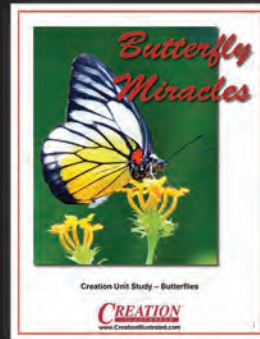
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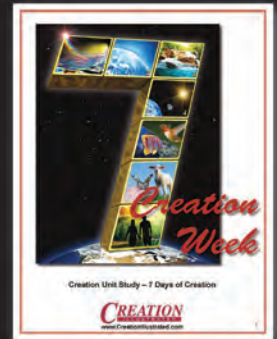
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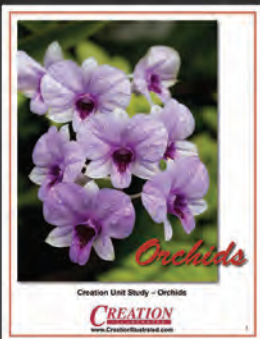
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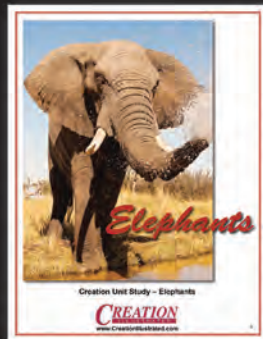
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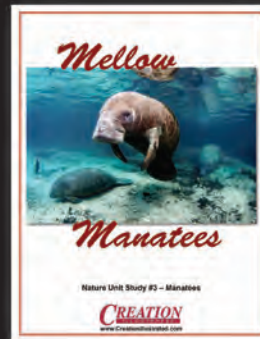
Creation Week



Orchids



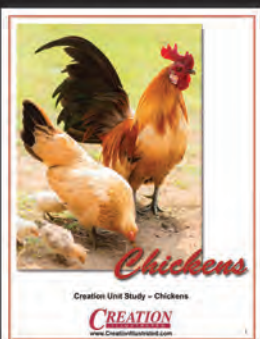
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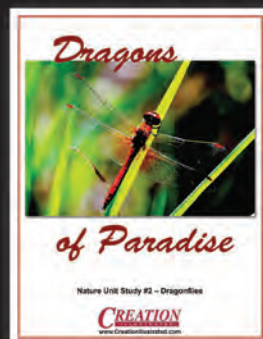
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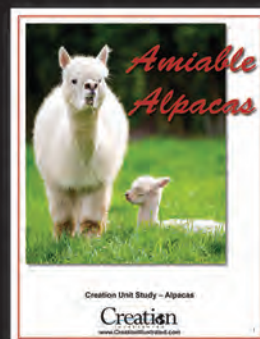
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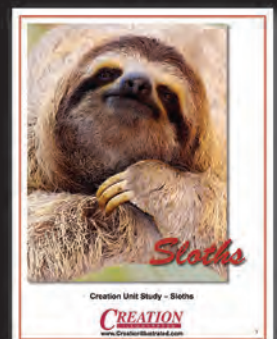
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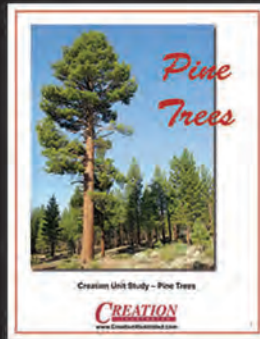


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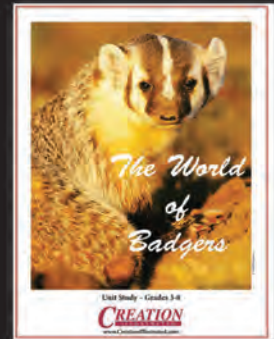
Fragrance



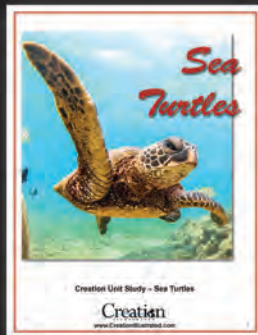
Pine Trees



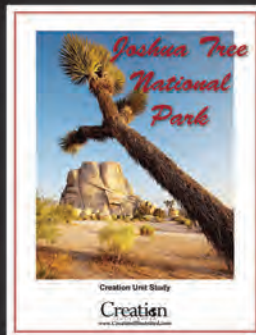
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Badgers



Sea Turtles



Joshua Tree
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Octopus

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*Golden
Grace*



There's nothing quite like autumn,
To remind me of God's golden grace.
As flowing rivers hopscotch the hills,
So His grace splashes upon my face.

Autumn turns my tired soul aside,
From summer's hot, humid race.
As crimson leaves fall, I give God my all,
So grateful for autumn's golden grace.

– Douglas Rose

***"The meek shall eat
and be satisfied."***

— Psalm 22:26, KJV



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